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SUBJECT: UAE REQUESTS U.S. SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION COUNCIL NOMINATION

REF: A. STATE 51211

1B. STATE 46962

11. (U) The Embassy received via diplomatic note May 28 the UAE's request for U.S. support for their nomination to the International Telecommunication Union Council (ITU).

12. (U) Begin text of diplomatic note:

The Ministry has the honor to inform the Embassy that the UAE has achieved a distinguished level in telecommunications, regulatory affairs and information technology. On this basis, the UAE has applied for nomination to the International Telecommunication Union Council (ITU) for the period of 2006-2010. The election will take place during the International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference, November 2006 in Antalya, Turkey.

End Text.

13. (SBU) Comment: The UAE has a mobile phone penetration rate of 95% and a well developed telecommunications sector. It joined the International Telecommunication Union in 1972. Etisalat, the UAE's first telecommunications company, has significant foreign investments. In April 2004, the UAE officially broke the monopoly rights of the 60% UAEG owned telecommunications company Etisalat. Subsequently, the UAE provided a license to the Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (branded Du), which is 40% owned by the UAEG. The other 60% of the shares are equally divided among Emirate of Abu Dhabi and Emirate of Dubai state-owned enterprises and publicly traded shares. Once the two telecommunications companies conclude their access agreements, telecommunications in the UAE will be offered by a duopoly. So far, the UAE has resisted further opening its telecommunications sector. End Comment.

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